



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE,**

**AT THE 77<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY**

**“GENERAL DEBATE”**

**NEW YORK, 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Excellency, Csaba Kőrösi, President of the General Assembly;**  
**Excellency, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;**  
**Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,**  
**Distinguished Delegates,**

1. Let me commend the President of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for his sustained efforts in returning the General Assembly to its pre-pandemic work pace and his message of hope.
2. Let me also extend my congratulations to your Excellency Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, on your assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly. I am gratefully optimistic about your leadership in these unprecedented times.
3. I also commend the Secretary-General, **Mr. Antonio Guterres**, for galvanizing the necessary multilateral support in search of solutions to meet the scale and urgency of current global challenges. His timely submission of the “Our Common Agenda” report, that speaks to strengthening global governance with a focus on a future agenda driven by multilateral solidarity and collective action, is also commendable.
4. As our world wrestles with an unprecedented and volatile economic outlook because of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and other global crises, the theme “**A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges**” is most appropriate and timely.

**Mr. President,**

5. Our progress towards achieving the global sustainable development goals by 2030 has been complicated by the repurposing of global development and investment finance, disruptions of production and supply chains, growing food

and energy insecurities, general slow-downs in the economies of nations, and the perennial adverse effects of climate change.

6. I call on the global family to be intentional and fair about developing innovative development financing products that are free from the stringent restrictions and high transaction costs associated with concessionary loans. Multilateral financial institutions can de-risk investments that are critical for sustainable economic development. Aid must also be aligned with domestic development priorities.

**Mr. President,**

7. The adverse effects of climate change are borderless. Global warming, unpredictable weather patterns, rising sea levels, and land degradation are taking a profound toll on global food and water security. There are associated governance and stability costs. We are informed that Africa faces disproportionate risks and costs from climate change.
8. We must therefore, be consistent in meeting our commitments to all existing international frameworks for addressing climate change. Beyond the usual declaratives, we must collaborate on and coordinate mitigation efforts, improve infrastructure for early warning systems, invest more in improving the management of water resources, promote disaster risk management, and enhance the conservation and protection of natural habitats. There are also opportunities, especially for Africa and Sierra Leone in particular, for just energy and just rural agriculture transitions.
9. Fair and accessible multilateral climate financing can catalyse the global and country-specific measures and innovation necessary to build and support sustainable climate resilience. Green investing does support sustainable

development. In these efforts, the roles and interests of women and young people must be central to climate investments.

10. Sierra Leone is fully committed to concluding the Treaty on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of areas beyond National Jurisdiction. The BBNJ treaty must prioritise, among other things, conservation measures, fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits, meaningful capacity development, and the transfer of marine technology.

**Mr. President,**

11. Human Capital Development is a critical driver of inclusive and sustainable economic development. Sierra Leone has increased domestic financing for education, provided teaching and learning materials, improved education policies and governance. More children, more girls including pregnant girls, poorer and rural learners, and learners with disabilities are now in school. But we can go beyond these access deficits.

12. As co-Chair of the High-Level Steering Committee on SDG4, and champion of the Transforming Education Summit during this 77<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, I urge concerted global efforts to address the learning crises. We can mobilise innovative financing models, underwrite universal access especially for girls and learners with disabilities, promote technology in education, make greater investments in foundational literacy and numeracy, address “water, sanitation, and hygiene” (WASH) and other infrastructure deficits, support school feeding programmes, fund technical and vocational training, and finance other needs across the full spectrum of the education sector. With close cooperation among States, we are confident that we will address the learning crisis in our time.

**Mr. President,**

13.To address the global food crisis that is disproportionately affecting least developed countries, Sierra Leone joins the urgent call for action to escalate financing to support agriculture and irrigation, enhance food systems and nutrition for vulnerable populations, and social protection for at-risk populations. Sierra Leone also associates with calls to ease global supply constraints especially for fertilisers, rice, and other agricultural commodities. Multilateral support for establishing agricultural development banks that will support private agricultural investments and agricultural value-addition will promote self-sufficiency and greater resilience in that sector.

14.The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that equity, multilateral cooperation, and a comprehensive global response are what we need to address health emergencies that have a potential to undermine global peace, security and development. Sierra Leone affirms its commitment to global efforts at exploring innovative and effective ways to enhance health securities, pandemic preparedness, build capacities to respond to health emergencies, and enhance greater resilience in healthcare delivery.

15.Sierra Leone believes that multilateral support is urgently needed to complement national efforts at reducing maternal and child mortality; preventing epidemics; tackling tropical and communicable diseases; building healthcare infrastructure and the capacity of healthcare personnel; and strengthening primary healthcare. Efforts at increasing domestic financing of healthcare should be supported with increased multilateral financing and enhanced cooperation.

16.Sierra Leone remains exclusively committed to the global agenda on “Putting women and girls at the centre” of inclusive and sustainable development. We

believe that we cannot deliver on the 2030 agenda on sustainable development without the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. We must therefore garner multilateral support to achieve and sustain gender equality and the empowerment of women in our lifetime.

**Mr. President, Excellencies,**

17. Sexual violence is a grave threat to justice and the fundamental rights of men, women, and children throughout the world. In every corner of the globe, sexual assault survivors are inhibited in holding perpetrators accountable and accessing empowering health, legal, and economic remedies. In Sierra Leone, we have taken extensive legislative and administrative actions to address sexual and gender-based violence since my declaration of rape as a national emergency in 2019.

18. Last year, before this August Assembly, I announced that I had directed the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations to sponsor a standalone resolution on access to justice for survivors of sexual violence at the General Assembly. I called for global solidarity on this issue, and for the United Nations to give all survivors of sexual violence the remedy they deserve.

19. The General Assembly on 2<sup>nd</sup> September this year, adopted by consensus the landmark resolution entitled "*International Cooperation for Access to Justice, Remedies and Assistance for Survivors of Sexual Violence*".

20. The General Assembly has therefore affirmed the sincere and shared belief of the global community that sexual violence is condemnable, and that member States must take effective action to address it, as well as provide access to timely and un-impeded justice through national legislation for victims and survivors.

21. As a global community we have signalled our resolve to address this scourge. We must now do all we can to implement access to justice and other remedies, to ensure dignity for all survivors of sexual violence.

**Mr. President, Excellencies,**

22. Small States make up the majority of the membership of the United Nations and they are the strongest advocates for the rules-based international system that underpins the work of the United Nations. Indeed, small States have served as key drafters, negotiators, and thought-leaders on a variety of international issues. They have done so diligently through transparency of purpose and coalition building across board.

23. In that connection, Sierra Leone proposes to further pursue these values in the United Nations Security Council. I count on the invaluable and resounding support of this body for Sierra Leone's bid for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the term 2024-2025, with elections to be held in June 2023.

**Mr. President,**

24. My Government reaffirms its commitment to the relevant UN Charter provision and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples as contained in General Assembly resolution 1514. We join the call on all parties engaged in the dialogue on decolonisation to continue to demonstrate good faith and firm commitment to a conclusive and durable resolution of all sovereignty disputes.

25. As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten (C-10) on the Reform of the Security Council, I am pleased to note the commendable

progress that has been achieved in the intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) on the reform of the Security Council. We believe that progress made during the 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly is underpinned by the Assembly's acknowledgement of the "wider recognition of, and broader support by Member States, for the legitimate aspiration of African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage".

26. As Africa continues to advocate and canvass support for the Common African Position as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, I urge Member States to continue to demonstrate their renewed commitment and political will towards correcting the historical injustice done to Africa by supporting the reform of the Security Council to make it a more inclusive, democratic, transparent, accountable, legitimate, and efficient global organ that properly reflects and adequately addresses the geo-political realities of our present and future world.

27. Sierra Leone is committed to engaging constructively within the multilateral rules-based order of the United Nations. Only through global cooperation can we engender and implement transformative solutions to global challenges.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**